
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 12 April 2017

by Elaine Gray MA(Hons) MSc IHBC

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government

Decision date: 21 April 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/J4525/D/16/3164443

Wood View Cottage, Station Avenue South, Fencehouses, Houghton-Le-Spring DH4 6HW

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 against a refusal to grant planning permission.
 - The appeal is made by Steven Joyce against the decision of Sunderland City Council.
 - The application Ref 16/01317/FUL, dated 10 May 2016, was refused by notice dated 28 October 2016.
 - The development is 2m high concrete panel fence.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary matters

2. The development has already been carried out, and I have considered the appeal on that basis. The description of the development varies between the application form and the subsequent documents. I have used a truncated version of the description given on the appeal form as this describes the development more succinctly.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is the effect of the development on the character and appearance of the surrounding area.

Reasons

4. The development which is the subject of the appeal comprises a series of textured concrete panels set within concrete posts which form the boundary to the property at Wood View Cottage. The structure is approximately 2m in height. I note that the previous timber fence was removed due to its poor state of repair.
 5. The Council's document entitled 'Household Alterations and Extensions Supplementary Planning Document' (SPD, undated) sets out guidelines for walls, fences and other means of enclosure. It requires that boundary enclosures to the front of properties or in prominent locations should take account of the character of the area and of the scale, design and materials used.
 6. On my site visit, I saw that the boundary treatments in the vicinity are predominantly brick. The nearby terraced properties on the main road have lower brick boundary walls, some also with metal railings. Directly across the
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road from the appeal site is a significantly taller brick wall. These boundary treatments keep in with the character and appearance of the street, which is predominantly characterised by brick buildings.

7. Due to its concrete construction and grey colour, the appearance of the development is uncharacteristic of the area. It is markedly at odds with the prevailing form and appearance of the brick boundary walls which are more typical of the surroundings. The development is particularly prominent due to its substantial length and overall height, and its location by the main road, and these factors add to its visual incongruity.
8. The appellant has indicated that they are willing to paint the concrete structure to make it look more like a fence. However, painted fencing is not typical of the area either. In any case, the textured surface of the concrete panels would be likely to remain apparent even if painted, and so it would be clear that the development was not a timber fence. I acknowledge the appellant's concern that the replacement of the structure would be costly, but this circumstance would not outweigh the harm I have identified.
9. Drawing these factors together, I find that the development unacceptably harms the character and appearance of the surrounding area. It therefore conflicts with Policy B2 of the City of Sunderland Unitary Development Plan 1998, which seeks to ensure that development should respect and enhance the best qualities of nearby properties and the locality. It is also contrary to the guidelines given in the SPD.
10. For those reasons, and taking all other matters into consideration, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Elaine Gray

INSPECTOR